



**California State Board of Pharmacy**

1625 N. Market Blvd., Suite N219, Sacramento, CA 95834  
Phone (916) 574-7900  
Fax (916) 574-8618  
www.pharmacy.ca.gov

STATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AGENCY  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
GOVERNOR EDMUND G. BROWN JR.

## **Questions and Answers about Plan B Emergency Contraception**

Plan B emergency contraception was previously available over-the-counter (without a prescription) to women aged 18 or older and only by prescription to those under 18. In July 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the sale of both Plan B (two tablet dose, 12 hours apart) and Plan B One-Step (one tablet dose) over-the-counter to men and women purchasers age 17 and older, and by prescription to women under 17 years of age.

All other contraceptive drugs require a prescription, regardless of the purchaser's age.

The following questions and answers provide guidance to patients and pharmacies.

### ***Who may sell Plan B drugs?***

Plan B drugs will be sold only in pharmacies/stores staffed by a licensed pharmacist, but the law does not specify which individual may sell Plan B drugs. Anyone of the pharmacy staff—a pharmacist, pharmacist intern, pharmacy technician or clerk—may sell them.

### ***Who can buy Plan B drugs over-the counter?***

Men and women age 17 and older may purchase Plan B drugs over-the-counter, but are required to provide personal identification showing proof of age.

### ***What if the purchaser lacks the identification?***

The pharmacy needs to determine if a purchaser is 17 or older the same way retailers need to determine whether a customer is 18 for cigarettes or 21 for alcohol sales. Alternatively, a pharmacy that is unable to determine whether a purchaser is age 17 or older may have a qualified pharmacist write a prescription for the Plan B drug.

### ***How does a woman under 17 years of age obtain Plan B products?***

For women younger than 17 years of age, both Plan B products require prescriptions. If the purchaser does not have one, a qualified pharmacist may write the prescription.

***Does a pharmacist need to consult with patients when selling Plan B products?***

No, unless in the pharmacist's judgment consultation is warranted. However, the board considers selling Plan B drugs over-the-counter to those 17 and older to be an important change and an opportunity for pharmacists to assist patients with their understanding of these drugs and their correct use. Pharmacists should be alert to any need for patient education and do whatever is needed and appropriate to be sure that patients understand these products.

***Does the pharmacist need to keep records of Plan B drugs sold to purchasers age 17 or older?***

No.

***Does the pharmacist need to keep records of Plan B products dispensed pursuant to prescriptions to females younger than 17?***

Yes. As with all prescription drugs, the pharmacist must enter the prescription information into the pharmacy's patient medication record and provide consultation. The record must be kept for one year from the prescription's issue date.

***The California emergency contraception (EC) protocol, developed by the Board of Pharmacy and Medical Board of California, lists a number of other EC products. Are these products sold over-the-counter?***

No. Only Plan B drugs are classified for over-the-counter use for purchasers age 17 and older. The other products listed in the California EC protocol remain prescription items that can be prescribed by a pharmacist according to the protocol provisions.